

My earliest memories of race stem from three specific events in my childhood.

1. My father's daily lessons about the history of Africans who were brought here to America.
2. My exposure in school to the many images of iconic and important African American contributors in America's growth and development.
3. The then current Worldview of African Americans portrayed in the media.

I was born in 1971 right upon the heels of the civil rights/Black power movement of the 60's era, which was for me a fortunate occurrence. Black was as beautiful then as it is now, and the momentum of both movements still resonated within the community in which I lived. Being an avid reader at a young age allowed me to investigate the multiple and complex components surrounding the African American experience. My father was Vietnam Veteran who had survived two tours in Vietnam and having been deployed when he was only seventeen had a profound impact upon his awareness of how he was viewed as a Black American soldier during a time when race relations in the U.S. were still volatile and one-sided at best.

I believe this among other things is the reason that he took so much pride in educating me about the beauty of our people. Growing up I wasn't taught to dislike any other race my father and mother were against this type of thinking and teaching because it is obvious that the world is made up of a many peoples, cultures, and beliefs.